

VBAC PREPARATION



MEEGAN
STEPHENS

PREPARING FOR YOUR VBAC

DOULA // NATUROPATH //
HERBALIST

LET'S GET YOU READY

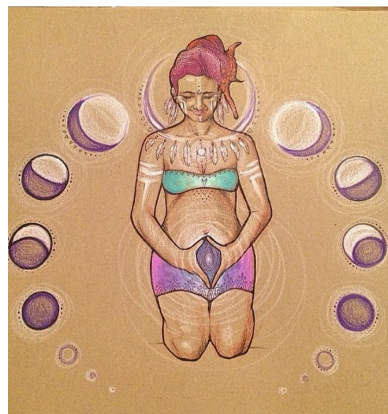
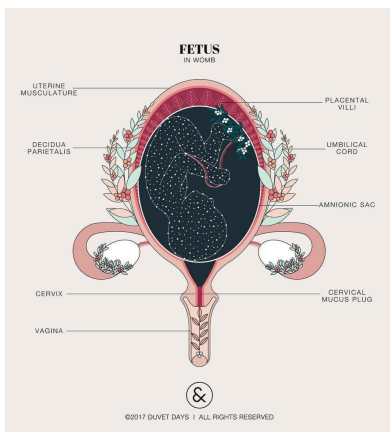
Giving life is the most special gift a woman can share. I am beyond excited for you and I hope you find these resources helpful and knowledgeable and they help to put any stress at ease!

Congratulations mumma on taking back your power and readying yourself for a vaginal birth after caesarean. I understand you must have thought long and hard about this birth and I hope you find these resources helpful and empowering.

My theory is “don’t question, just ask!” so please feel free to reach out with any specific queries you or your partner have!

Much love,

Meegs x



Birth is a *rite of passage* of women. Their journey should be *honored*, their rights should be *fiercely protected*, and their stories should be *shared*.
– Marcie Macari
author of *She Births*

PREPARATION

Mumma's health and wellbeing

You are about to be a mumma again- Congratulations!!!

Your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing is of the utmost importance.

Please give yourself time and space to regularly check in with each aspect of your health and wellbeing.

Here's some tips for all:

Physical-

- Ensure you are eating nutritious meals with plenty of colourful and vibrant foods; good quality proteins; whole grain carbohydrates; healthy fats and of course mumma cacao!!
- Stay hydrated! Lots of water, hydrolytes, herbal tea and broth!
- Gentle but steady exercise: like walking, yoga, cycling, swimming.
- Vitamin D- enjoy some beautiful sunshine everyday

Mental-

- Notice how you are feeling each day and allow yourself time and space to navigate these feelings
- Share your rollercoaster with your partner/doula/family/support team
- Reach out to support groups if you need external and extra assistance
- Keep a journal of your triggers, fears, jubilation and excitement

Spiritual-

- Note your connection to your self and your baby
- Follow and let yourself be guided by your intuition
- Find support in energy healings or clearings
- Connect with yourself and your baby with specific (and guided) breathwork
- Pregnancy Yoga can assist with spiritual connection

Emotional-

- Journal your feelings, emotions and fears
- Note down anything to be processed with your doula or health care provider (fear release, questions, unresolved wounds etc)
- Do an emotional scan of your body each day from head to toe
- share your thoughts and feelings with your partner, doula, family or support person to share the load.

Bubba's health and

Now - as long as you are ticking the above boxes your baby's health

wellbeing

and well-being will be thriving!

- Taking time to slow down
- Listen to your body - do you need sleep? Rest? Movement?
- Connect to your baby through talking, music, breathwork
- Eat well - nutritious and alive foods
- Stay hydrated
- Enjoy time with your partner together!

Birth plan

Birth is beautiful! Birth is raw! birth is powerful! You will remember your birth forever!

Being prepared is key! Knowing you want a VBAC has started you on a path of feeling into and understanding your body, a little bit better.

To ensure you are prepared, have your birth plan written early so you can add/adapt it as you and your baby grow.

It's important to have this ready and your support people are known and on the same page.

Be prepared to discuss this with your health care providers, and be prepared to be questioned and queried about your VBAC choices. Here's some tips to consider/include:

- WHY you'd like to VBAC- be open and discuss this with your health care providers. It's important they understand why this is important to you and why you would like a different outcome to your previous caesarean birth.
- Support people you would like present
- Birth photography / videography
- Room preferences (lighting, smell, vibes etc)
- Views on pain relief
- Intervention preferences
- Before due date arrival
- After date arrival
- Upon arrival to birth center/hospital
- Consent around vaginal exams and intervention
- Partner contributions
- Pushing preferences
- After birth process- cord / placenta preference / skin to skin
- Immediate after birth shots - placenta / vit K etc

CONSIDER

VBAC support

Local support:

- **Mid North Coast midwifery private midwifery care/support:**

midnorthmidwifery@outlook.com

- **Port Macquarie Base hospital:**

🌐 Port Macquarie Base Hospital - Mid North Coast Local Health District

- **Dr Leah Zvirginas** birth debrief and educator:

<https://www.leahjayne.com.au>

- **Kassie Doughty**, childbirth education and hypnobirthing practitioner:

<https://branchesofyoga.com.au/childbirth-education/>

Online Support:

- <https://raisingchildren.net.au/pregnancy/labour-birth/vaginal-caesarean-birth/vbac>
- <https://vbacfacts.com/2012/01/16/myth-risk-of-uterine-rupture-doesnt-change-much-after-a-caesarean/>
- <https://www.bellybelly.com.au/birth/vaginal-birth-after-c-section-vbac/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/342851302473349/>

*Birth center /
Hospital
support*

It's important to go into your VBAC educated, supported and feeling empowered. Here's some ideas of questions to ask your birth center or hospital during your pregnancy:

- Is your space supportive of VBAC birth?
- How many successful VBAC's have you witnessed?
- What are your statistics on uterine rupture?
- What is your current caesarean rate?
- What is your policy on physiological birth?
- What are your thoughts on doula support?
- What are your thoughts on my birth plan?
- What do you feel about empowered and unassisted birth?
- What is the policy for 'failure to progress'? How much time am I given to labour without further intervention?
- Are you personally on board for my VBAC?

*Doula
Support*

A Doula is biggest cheerleader and greatest advocate for the birth that you want. Having the support of a doula while you have chosen to VBAC can give you an extra set of hands: physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

A doula will help you hold your boundaries and respect your space to birth the way you wish and support you on your VBAC journey.

Having a doula present in the lead to your up for support can gift you extra education, support and preparation for your VBAC.

Having your doula present while you birth can keep you focussed on your goals of birthing your baby vaginally, hold space for you to be present with your partner and really allow you to be in the moment with your body and baby,

Language

Having your team on board for your birth is vital! Vital for you to be safe, secure and held during your birth and also to be seen and heard during your VBAC.

Be conscious of your language choices around your VBAC preparation and talking positively with your support team and health care providers.

Being open and honest about your VBAC plans and also your expectations of your outcomes will help your team understand you more clearly.

READY FOR BIRTH

VBAC Benefits

- Empowered birth
- Mother and baby bonding/connection
- Fewer breastfeeding complications
- No huge surgery to recover from
- Microbiome colonisation
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VBAC risk

It is important to remember when talking about statistics to keep things in perspective for your own unique circumstance and to not get lured into fear.

Being well informed is very important and knowing your own statistics shows you are educated and understand the risks associated with having your planned VBAC.

Language is very important when discussing the risks with your healthcare provider and remember to remain calm, in your power and ask for specific data related to your circumstances.

Below are noted the most common risks associated with VBAC and their likelihood in 1000 labours/births. Remember to do your own research.

- Uterine rupture: 7-8 times in every 1000 planned VBAC's
 - Shoulder dystocia: 6-14 out of 1000 labours
 - Cord Prolapse: 14-62 out of 1000 labours
 - Placenta abruption: 11-13 out of 1000 labours
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FOURTH TRIMESTER

Placenta Birth

Once your baby is born, the third stage is to birth the placenta.

The placenta really is an amazing organ and has been the lifeline of the baby for the duration of pregnancy.

The baby uses the placenta as it's lungs, digestive system, and liver. Without the placenta, there can be no new life! how incredible is this organ!!

If you choose to have a physiological birth of the placenta, this means that you will prefer to wait for surges to start again to detach the placenta from the uterine wall and be born.

It is hard to predict how long this process can take, sometimes it is as quick as 15 minutes and then other times it can be over an hour or longer.

If you have skin to skin and also wait for your baby to breast crawl or put your baby straight to your breast to start sucking, nuzzling, or just touching the breast, this will then trigger the release of more oxytocin to increase the effectiveness of contractions to birth the placenta.

You want smell, touch, taste, sound, and breast to trigger the release of oxytocin so your placenta is released efficiently.

Visitation

Be cautious of overdoing it too soon! Taking it slow is VITAL! For your recovery and also for you to bond with your precious new baby!

Put a message out to your friends and family that want to meet your new baby. This message could include your plans for a caesarean birth and what you *need* to support your recovery and *how* they can best show up and help during their visit!

Also include a disclaimer of "no drop in visits!"

Breastfeeding support

Bonding with your baby is a beautiful time! One that you should enjoy! Breastfeeding can be tricky and sometimes difficult.

Be aware of this and plan to have some support to guide you through this journey.

Engage a doula, a lactation specialist, or a midwife to be present and assist with any questions and queries you might have to make this a smoother road for you and your baby!

Fourth Trimester

This I cannot stress enough:

Rest, rest, rest!!! It's the very best thing you can do, for yourself, your new baby and your family unit.

You never get this time back and leaning in to meet and bond with your new baby is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Allow yourself time and space to settle into the fourth trimester. It's a huge adjustment and support is key.

- Hydration is vital!
- Nutritious meals
- Healthy snacks on hand - breastfeeding is hard work! Snack away
- Sleep whenever you get a chance
- Sunshine - enjoy the vitamin D on your face and body (especially with no bra and sore breasts!!)
- Debriefing with a doula, counsellor or good friend
- journaling your process of birth and post partum
- Breathework can help you stay connected, calm and present
- Limit screen time - stay present and in your body, not distracted and overstimulated

BIRTH YOUR WAY

Details:

Holistic Doula // Naturopath // Herbalist // Shamanic Space holder

Please reach out for more details and in depth support and love.

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